THE CHILDREN'S ONLINE PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT OF 1998

To protect our children online, Congress passed this law in 1998 which:

- prohibits unfair or deceptive acts or practices in connection with the collection, use, or disclosure of personally identifiable information from children on the Internet;

- imposes requirements on operators of websites or online services directed towards children under the age of 13; and

- requires that website operators obtain verifiable parental consent prior to collecting, using, or disclosing personal information from children under the age of 13.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact the Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection toll-free hotline at

1-800-441-2555
www.attorneygeneral.gov

TIPS ON PROTECTING YOUR CHILD:

- **Find and read the privacy policies on the websites geared towards children.**
  Learn the kinds of personal information being collected, how it will be used, and whether it will be passed to third parties.

- **Decide whether to give your consent.**
  Your consent gives the website permission to collect personal information from your child.

**You can give consent and still say no to having the information passed along to a third party.

- **Ask to see the information your child has submitted.**
  The site will ask you to verify your identity to ensure that your child's information isn't given out improperly.

- When a website significantly changes the terms of use of the information provided by your child, you will be notified and asked whether or not you consent to the new terms.
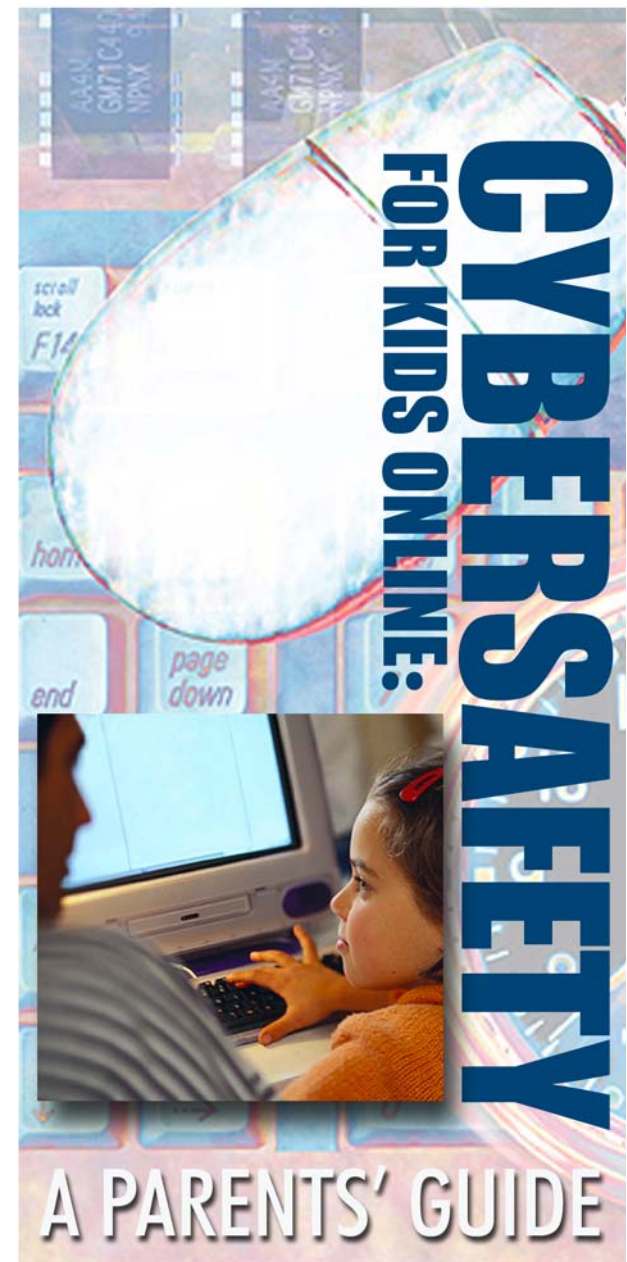
**You may revoke your consent at any time and have your child's information deleted.

CHILD EXPLOITATION TASK FORCE

The Attorney General has formed the Child Exploitation Task Force to combat child predators and investigate complaints involving the sexual exploitation of children. The Task Force also provides assistance to law enforcement agencies throughout the Commonwealth and the United States.

You may contact the Task Force by email at:
taskforce@attorneygeneral.gov
or by calling **717-712-5013**

PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

CYBERSAFETY
FOR KIDS ONLINE:

A PARENTS' GUIDE

JERRY PAPPERT
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Dear Pennsylvanians:

The Internet has opened up a world of information for anyone with a computer and a phone line. Today's children are taught at an early age how to operate a computer and routinely access the Internet. But just as you wouldn't send children near a busy street without some safety rules, you shouldn't send them on the information superhighway without rules of the road. Too many dangers - from pedophiles to con artists - can reach children (and adults) through the Internet. The following information can help you understand some of the dangers of "surfing the Net."

Gerald J. Pappert
Attorney General

GETTING STARTED

Explain to children that although a person may be alone in a room using the computer, once logged on to the Internet, he or she is no longer alone. People skilled in using the Internet can find out who you are and where you are. They can even tap into information in your computer.

Set aside time to explore the Internet together. If your child has some computer experience, let him or her take the lead. Visit areas of the World Wide Web that have special sites for children.

CONTROLLING ACCESS

Choose a commercial online service that offers parental control features. These features can block contact with sites that are not clearly marked as appropriate for children: chat rooms, bulletin boards, news groups and discussion groups.

Purchase blocking software and design your own safety system. Different packages can search for unacceptable words, and then block sites by those words or by the site's name. They can also block entire categories of material and prevent children from giving out personal information.

Talk to your children about exploitation, pornography, hate literature, excessive violence and other issues that concern you, so they know how to respond if confronted with inappropriate material.

Monitor your children when they're online and limit the time they spend online. If a child becomes uneasy or defensive when you walk into the room or when you linger around, this could be a sign that they are up to something unusual or even forbidden.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN THE COMMUNITY

Make sure that access to the Internet at your children's school is monitored by adults.

Make sure that your child's school has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). This policy should include a list of acceptable and unacceptable activities as well as information on "netiquette" (etiquette on the Internet). It should also include consequences for violations of the policy. Your family can design its own AUP for the home computer.

Discuss the Internet with your children's friends and their parents. If your child's friend has Internet access at home, talk to the parents about the rules they have established. Find out if the children are monitored while they are online.

If your child receives threatening e-mails or pornographic material, save the offensive material and contact your local law enforcement agency and your Internet service provider.

If you come across sites that are inappropriate for children, send the addresses to online services that offer parental control features and to sites advertising protection software. They can then add the addresses to their lists. Even if you don't subscribe to the service or own the protection software, you can help protect other children.

TELL YOUR CHILDREN TO...

- Always let you know immediately if they find something scary or threatening on the Internet.
- Never give out their name, address, school name, parent's name or any other personal information.
- Never agree to meet face to face with someone they've met online.
- Never respond to messages that have bad words or seem scary or unusual.
- Never send a picture of themselves to anyone without your permission.